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STATINTL

How Good Are Our Secret Agents?

Did the Central Intelligence Agency misjudge the strength that Castro and his militia could muster in the recent "invasion" fiasco?

A CIA spokesman, declining to be quoted by name, declares the charge is ridiculous. But other Washington sources (including some in position to know) still maintain that the super-secret agents of Allen Dulles decided the time was ripe to strike and that a few hundred ill-trained insurgents could give Cuba's Castro his final what-for.

And if the report is true, or even partially factual, it's a serious indictment.

As any effective espionage agency must be, the CIA is sheathed from public prying. Except for token reports to secret Congressional committees, it is required to make no ac-

counting for the money it spends (rumored to be more than \$500 million annually) or the activities of its operatives (more than 10,000). But few of us complain about the money or the secrecy until we're confronted with facts that are, to be generous, mystifying.

Is the CIA actually doing an effective job of spying?

Was the U-2 incident just an accidental bobble?

How excuse the lack of advance intelligence on the Japanese riots that embarrassed President Eisenhower, too late to get off the hook?

Why did we play drop-the-handkerchief with ineffectuals in Laos?

What, in truth, about Cuba?

We are, concededly, critical; it is easy to be critical from a hill in North Carolina. But we are also concerned. And the questions beg answers.